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A Job 40 DINOSAUR: REASONABLE?

Q&A:

Inconsistencies
and Contradictions
in the Bible?

The **Piercing**
of **JESUS**

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Is it **REASONABLE** to Suggest God Was Describing a **Dinosaur** in Job 40?

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

Article In Brief...



Some Bible believing creationists have summarily dismissed the suggestion that the Behemoth of Job 40 could be a dinosaur. The available scientific, physical, and historical evidence (added to the textual evidence) makes the suggestion not only reasonable, but likely.

SEVERAL lines of evidence strongly suggest that biblical Job¹ likely lived after the Flood and before the time of Moses, perhaps at roughly the time of Abraham or slightly before (ca. 2100-2000 B.C.).² In Job 40:15-24, God shows Job an herbivorous beast called Behemoth, presumably living at the time, which is described as “first” or “chief” of the ways of God.³ Behemoth’s precise identity still defies scholars since, upon examining its biblical description, there is no perfect equivalent among extant animal species. Many Bible believers have long observed that the description of Behemoth in the text matches best with that of a dinosaur,⁴ specifically a sauropod.⁵ That assessment, if true, would be a powerful biblical testimony of a young Earth and biblical Creation, as well as a refutation of evolution, since it would prove humans co-existed with dinosaurs and that they did not go extinct 65 million years ago—effectively falsifying evolution,

its erroneous timeline, and uniformitarian geology.

In our experience, many have agreed with the suggestion that Behemoth may have been a sauropod. Others have (presumably) assessed the same evidence we present, but come to a different conclusion about the identity of Behemoth. We appreciate that they at least considered the evidence (1 Thessalonians 5:21), though we may not agree with their conclusion. We have encountered some Bible believing, young Earth individuals, however, who appear to refuse to fairly assess the arguments. Instead, they immediately scoff at the suggestion of a dinosaurian Behemoth without thought, believing it to be unreasonable at best and silly and hokey at worst. Why?

The reason for their resistance to the idea is not always clear. The individuals to which we are referring are young Earth, anti-evolution, Bible believers and, as such, we would think they would be will-

ing to consider the implications of their position, as unconventional as those implications might be to the secular world. Is their resistance because they were trained (by evolution-believing teachers) to believe from a young age that dinosaurs and humans never co-existed? Do they realize in that conclusion that they are taking a position that is evolutionary and, therefore, unbiblical?⁶ In some cases, leading Job commentaries were written before dinosaurs had even been discovered in the 1800s (and, therefore, could not have yet been assessed as possible identities of Behemoth). Then, even after dinosaurs had been discovered, the anatomy of many dinosaurs was not even adequately understood for many years, disallowing by Hebrew scholars an anatomical comparison between the biblical description of Behemoth and dinosaurs. Further, since they were billed as the “poster children” of evolution, many within Christendom did not even accept the reality of dinosaurs for decades, again no doubt disallowing dinosaurs as possible Behemoth candidates by many Christian scholars up into the 1900s. Did those who so vehemently disregard dinosaurian options for Behemoth grow up reading or hearing lessons from preachers and scholars who accepted such mainstream Job commentaries or scholarly identifications from the 19th and 20th centuries? Were they taught the book of Job by teachers or professors who, themselves, did not know about the fossil record,



much less thought through its implications regarding the possible interpretation of Job 40 from a young Earth perspective? Did they simply rely on the “expertise” of old Earth evolutionary paleontologists without realizing that such individuals interpret the fossil record in a completely unbiblical way (and without realizing that there was such a thing as a valid biblical interpretation of the same fossil evidence)? Since many Christians once assumed that these extinct animals never existed, were they trained to believe that Behemoth **had** to be referring to an extant animal, like an elephant or hippo? Did they accept as “gospel” the 1901 ASV **footnote**, identifying Behemoth as the hippopotamus? John 12:42 notes that “many” of the Jewish rulers believed in Jesus but would not confess Jesus out of fear—they did not want to be “expelled” from the synagogue. Similarly, is it possible that some today are intimidated by the repercussions of taking a position that would be scoffed at by academia?⁷

Whatever the reason, we have encountered such individuals over the years and scratched our heads wondering why they are seemingly closed-minded to the dinosaurian Behemoth position. They seem to reject the position without even considering for themselves, much less refuting, the evidence and rationale presented. From a biblical perspective, the position clearly fits the available scientific and textual evidence better than conventional interpretations of Behemoth’s identity and also provides powerful verification of biblical Creation predictions. For those young Earth, biblical creationists who are willing to consider the logical rationale for the position, here is the argument in succinct form.

First, even to be considered as candidates for the identity of Behemoth, dinosaurs had to have been

extant at the time of Job.⁸ Would they have been alive at the time of Job?

- The Earth is roughly 6,000–8,000 years old.⁹
- The fossil record indicates that dinosaurs lived on the Earth in the past.
- Dinosaurs are understood to be land-dwelling animals, so they were created on the sixth literal day of Creation week alongside humans (Genesis 1:24–31). Humans and dinosaurs, therefore, co-existed on the Earth in the past.

To most who accept a young Earth created by God, there is little disagreement up to this point in the reasoning process, although it might take a moment for the third point to sink in since it flies in the face of conventional teaching in society.

According to the genealogies of Genesis 5, after Creation, roughly 1,600 to 1,700 years passed between Creation and the global Flood described in Genesis 6–9. Did the dinosaurs go extinct during that pre-Flood time period?

- In the geologic column, the Flood is believed by many Creation geologists to begin at roughly the Cambrian layers of the Paleozoic strata. The evidence for that interpretation is extensive.¹⁰ The Flood strata then continue upwards at least through the Paleozoic and Mesozoic strata.¹¹ The dinosaur fossils are found in strata that are **well above** the initial rock layers of the Flood, in the Mesozoic strata, meaning that those strata were deposited **after** the Flood began.¹² Notably, as evidenced by the many dinosaur footprints found across the world in Mesozoic strata, many dinosaurs were clearly **still alive** when the Flood reached and killed them.¹³

- Since dinosaurs were alive when the Flood began and, according to Genesis 6:19–20 and 7:2–3, 8–9, 13–16, representatives of **all** of the Earth’s extant land beasts at the time of Noah were represented on the Ark, dinosaurs would have been represented on the Ark, though likely in juvenile form.¹⁴

So, it is reasonable to conclude, based on the evidence, that dinosaurs survived the Flood on the Ark. But how soon after the Flood did they go extinct?¹⁵

- Historical accounts of interactions between humans and what seem to be dinosaurs provide powerful testimony that dinosaurs, though they did not thrive after the Flood, indeed **survived** after the Flood for several hundred, if not thousands of years.¹⁶
- Physical evidence of the co-existence of humans and what appear to be dinosaurs suggests that dinosaurs may have been alive in various remote places on the Earth only a few hundred years ago.¹⁷

Dinosaurs not only survived the Flood by being on the Ark, but may have survived for millennia after the Flood and, therefore, it is highly likely that they were on the Earth at the time of Job, who most likely lived within only 500 years of the Flood. Notice, then, without any further textual evidence from Job 40 concerning the identity of Behemoth, if God wished to show Job an animal that was “chief” or “first” in illustrating what He is like (Job 40:19), and sauropod dinosaurs were still alive on the Earth, would it not seem at least **possible** that Behemoth could be a sauropod dinosaur?

As we have shown elsewhere, the textual evidence would at least allow a dinosaurian identity, considering, for example, the text’s description

of Behemoth's tail, bone structure, weight distribution, eating habits, habitat, etc.¹⁸ But some presumably honest individuals still summarily dismiss the possibility because of what they see as practical issues with the sauropod option, like the following:

(1) "There would not have been sufficient vegetation in Job's land (Uz) for a massive, herbivorous sauropod dinosaur to be able to survive. It's a desert!" However, in the first place, the location of Uz is not known with certainty. Further, recent evidence suggests that the presumed Uz region of the Earth was not always as arid as it is today. Prior to roughly 1500 B.C., for example, the Sahara Desert is thought to have been tropical and lush.¹⁹ Dinosaurs could have survived in the area for several hundred years after the Flood.

(2) "Since there is no evidence of sauropod dinosaurs in Job's area, God would not have been able to show Job a sauropod dinosaur as He showed him Behemoth." Assuming we are correct in our understanding of which rock layers mark the end of the Flood,²⁰ there is, as yet, no **fossil** evidence of dinosaurs after the Flood **at all**. However, as we have shown, dinosaurs would have survived the Flood on the Ark, and both **physical** and **historical** post-Flood evidence (e.g., archaeological artifacts and historical accounts) supports that supposition. We have also shown elsewhere that the absence of fossils of a species in rock strata is not a reliable indicator of the

animal's non-existence at the time (or the area in which) the strata were formed.²¹ Further, ancient Sumerian (in the supposed relative region of Uz) legends of humans interacting with what appears to be dinosaurs date back to the time likely **after** Job's life.²² Dinosaurs were apparently still in Job's region during his time. Even if they were not, however, it is reasonable to suggest that God could show Job Behemoth even if he had never seen it²³ when we consider the fact that God, in his speech to Job, had already highlighted several other things that Job may not have ever seen or even known about (e.g., 38:4-21).

Why would a thoughtful scholar dismiss out-of-hand a viable possibility without an adequate response to its many evidences? The unbiased young Earth creationist must surely concede that the identity of Behemoth as a sauropod dinosaur is at least **possible**, given the physical, historical, and scientific evidence. When the actual information in the biblical text is added to the equation,²⁴ does the identity of Behemoth as a sauropod dinosaur not become even **probable**? If not, why not? After all, if you were going to show Job an animal that was chief in exhibiting the ways of God, and a sauropod dinosaur was living at the time, what animal would **you** pick?

ENDNOTES

¹ A real person who walked the Earth in the past [cf. Eric Lyons (2002), "Was Job a Real Person?" *R&R Resources*, 1[7]:32-R, <https://apologeticspress.org/questions-and-answers-was-job-a-real-person-618/>].

² Based on biblical genealogies coupled with history. Cf. Eric Lyons (2008), "When Did Job Live?," *R&R Resources*, 7[7]:28-R, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/0807.pdf>.

³ Cf. Dave Miller (2008), "The 'First of the Ways of God,'" *R&R Resources*, 7[3]:9R-12R, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/0803.pdf>.

⁴ Eric Lyons and Kyle Butt (2008), *The Dinosaur Delusion* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press), pp. 113ff.; Dave Miller (2021), *Behemoth & Leviathan* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

⁵ I.e., the massive, long neck, long tail dinosaurs (e.g., apatosaurus, brachiosaurus, etc.). Cf. Jeff Miller (2020), "More Scientific and Textual Evidence of Behemoth's Identity," *Reason & Revelation*, 40[11]:128-129, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2011w.pdf>; Dave Miller (2019), "Behemoth and Leviathan: Figurative or Literal? (Part 1)," *Reason & Revelation*, 39[5]:56, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1905w.pdf>; Eric Lyons (2000), "Was the 'Behemoth' a Dinosaur?" Apologetics Press, <https://apologeticspress.org/was-the-behemoth-a-dinosaur-544/>.

⁶ Evolutionists argue that dinosaurs went extinct roughly 63 million years prior to the emergence of humans (i.e., the *homo* genus).

⁷ A Christian should never forget that we have been warned beforehand that aspects of the Christian faith will be viewed by the world as "foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:20-21,27). According to Jesus, in fact, it is a virtual certainty that the Christian will be hated by the world (John 15:18-21). Should the Christian compromise with the Devil to avoid being hated by his followers?

⁸ Unless, of course, God was showing Job the vision of a creature that He had made but was already extinct. The context, however, strongly suggests Behemoth was alive at the time (which is why many attempt to argue that Behemoth



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- was a then **currently** living animal or one which would soon go extinct relative to Job, like the mammoth).
- ⁹ Jeff Miller (2019), “21 Reasons to Believe the Earth is Young,” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[1]:2-11, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1901w.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ Steven A. Austin and Kurt P. Wise (1994), “The Pre-Flood/Flood Boundary: As Defined in Grand Canyon, Arizona and Eastern Mojave Desert, California,” *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Creationism*, ed. R.E. Walsh, pp. 37-47, <http://static.icr.org/i/pdf/technical/The-Pre-Flood-Boundary-as-defined-in-Grand-Canyon.pdf>; Jeff Miller (2019), “Was the Flood Global? Testimony from Scripture and Science,” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[4]:38-47, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1904w.pdf>.
- ¹¹ S.A. Austin, J.R. Baumgardner, D.R. Humphreys, A.A. Snelling, L. Vardiman, and K.P. Wise (1994), “Catastrophic Plate Tectonics: A Global Flood Model of Earth History,” *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Creationism*, ed. R.E. Walsh, pp. 609-621.
- ¹² Based on the principle of superposition, the geologic assumption that a lower rock layer in a sequence of rock layers (if they are in their original positions/orientations) was deposited before a rock layer above it.
- ¹³ Since the dinosaurs were buried in the Flood only roughly 4,500 years ago (based on history coupled with the Genesis 11 genealogies), it should come as no surprise that many dinosaur fossils are being discovered that still have unfossilized tissue within [cf. Jeff Miller (2022), “More Unfossilized Evidence of ‘Dinosaurs’ Living in the Recent Past,” *Reason & Revelation*, 42[1]:9-11, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2201-web.pdf>].
- ¹⁴ Jeff Miller (2019), “Was the Ark Large Enough for ALL of the Animals?” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[7]:82-83, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1907w.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ For a discussion of why the dinosaurs may have gone extinct, see Eric Lyons (2008), “What Happened to the Dinosaurs?” Apologetics Press, <https://apologeticspress.org/what-happened-to-the-dinosaurs-1771/>.
- ¹⁶ Eric Lyons (2007), “Historical Support for the Coexistence of Dinosaurs and Humans [Part 1],” *Reason & Revelation*, 27[9]:65-71, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/0709.pdf>.
- ¹⁷ Eric Lyons and Kyle Butt (2008), “Physi-
- cal Evidence for the Coexistence of Dinosaurs and Humans [Parts 1-2],” *Reason & Revelation*, 28[3-4].
- ¹⁸ Cf. Dave Miller (2021); Jeff Miller (2020).
- ¹⁹ Conventional uniformitarian dating methods estimate the transformation as occurring 5,000-6,000 years ago [Becky Oskin (2013), “Sahara Went from Green to Desert in a Flash,” LiveScience.com, April 5, <https://www.livescience.com/28493-when-sahara-desert-formed.html>; Texas A&M University (2016), “6,000 Years Ago, the Sahara Desert Was Tropical—What Happened?” Phys.org, December 1, <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-years-sahara-tropicalwhat.html>]. Creationists, however, have provided evidence to show that radioactive decay was accelerated during and after the Flood [cf. Jeff Miller (2013), “Don’t Assume Too Much: Not All Assumptions in Science Are Bad,” *Reason & Revelation*, 33[6]:62-70, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1306.pdf>] for several hundred years. Therefore, conventional dating methods yield, at the very least, **inflated** (if not totally unreliable) dates for those rocks that formed during and immediately after the Flood for several hundred years. The Sahara Desert transition date is estimated to correlate to roughly 1500-2000 B.C. in real time—after the time of Job.
- ²⁰ The end of the Cretaceous strata (i.e., the K-T/K-Pg boundary) or higher.
- ²¹ See the discussion of “living fossils” in
- Jeff Miller (2019), “Does the Fossil Record Support Creation and the Flood?” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[7]:77-80, <https://apologeticspress.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1907w.pdf>.
- ²² Samuel Noah Kramer (1959), *History Begins at Sumer* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday), p. 170; Peter Hogarth and Val Clery (1979), *Dragons* (New York: Viking Press), p. 13; Also, an ancient Mesopotamian cylinder seal depicting what could be sauropod dinosaurs with intertwined necks is on display at the Louvre in France, dating back to after the time of Job (again, after converting conventional uniformitarian dates to real time. Cf. <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010171374>).
- ²³ E.g., through vision or miraculous transportation (e.g., Acts 8:39; Luke 4:5; 24:31). When God told Job to “look now at the behemoth,” did there happen to be a Behemoth nearby, or did God show Job Behemoth in a special way? When God next described Leviathan (a sea creature) in Job 41, did He show Job the beast? If so, how did He do so? Was there a miraculous transportation involved? A vision? Or was He merely describing the animal without showing Leviathan to Job? If God merely described Leviathan without showing Job, why could He not do the same with another creature that was alive at the time, but might not be living in Job’s vicinity?
- ²⁴ Cf. Dave Miller, 2021, *Behemoth & Leviathan*; Jeff Miller, 2020, “More Scientific and Textual Evidence of Behemoth’s Identity.”

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Q&A: Inconsistencies and Contradictions in the Bible?

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

Q: “My son, who we raised to believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, became liberalized some years ago. He claims that there are ‘thousands of inconsistencies and contradictions’ in the Bible. After some discussion, I at last challenged him to give me a list of ‘inconsistencies and contradictions’ that he considered significant, and I would try to give him an answer as to why they are not what he claims. He only respects theologians and scholars who have a Ph.D. in Greek or Hebrew. Please find his allegations below, taken from his email. Thank you for your willingness to help!”

#1: 1 John 5:7-8 is often referred to as the Johannine Comma because it was also obviously added by a later scribe and was not included in our most reliable and oldest manuscripts. The removal of this passage has two implications: (a) on the divinity of Jesus, and (b) on the existence of the trinity (see point #2).

A: It is true that the *Comma Johanneum* is spurious.¹ However, neither the divinity of Jesus nor the existence of the Trinity is at stake, since both of these doctrines are taught in other passages that are not under dispute. The deity of Christ is taught repeatedly in both the Old and New Testaments. For example, the Gospel of John is devoted entirely to the topic (see the thematic statement in 20:30-31), as is Colossians with

its forthright affirmation: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (2:9, NIV). The doctrine of the Trinity is clear from such passages as Matthew 3:16-17 and 28:19.²

#2: John 1:1-18 is often called the Prologue of John’s gospel. However, the passage is missing from most of our oldest and most reliable manuscripts. Its absence could significantly impact the theological understanding of Jesus as God and who has existed from the beginning with the Father.

A: I am puzzled at the claim that the prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) is “missing from most of our oldest and most reliable manuscripts.” **That is simply not true.** There are scattered textual variants³ within that pericope, but the section itself is **not** missing from the “oldest and most reliable manuscripts.” For example, in Codex Vaticanus, Luke ends at the bottom of the 2nd column. John begins at the top of the 3rd column and contains John 1:1-14 (vss. 14ff. continue on the next page). See Figure 1.

What’s more, the discovery of \mathfrak{p}^{66} and \mathfrak{p}^{75} only strengthens the case for the deity of Christ in John 1:18. Both of those papyrus manuscripts (which date from the 2nd/3rd centuries), have *theos* (God) instead of *uios* (son), as indicated in the NASB: “No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten **God**, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has

explained Him”—a tremendous affirmation of Christ’s deity.

#3 Regarding Jesus’ humanity, there is significant evidence that numerous passages were added by later scribes in an effort to bolster the tenet of Jesus’ humanity in response to certain docetic “heresies” (specifically Marcion) during the 2nd century.

(a) In Luke 22:43-44 Jesus is said to be in agony in prayer to the point where his “...sweat became like drops of blood...” Most textual critics believe this is an addition to articulate Jesus’ humanity. It is also missing from most of our most reliable manuscripts.

A: It is true that Luke 22:43-44 has strong manuscript support against its authenticity (although a majority of the committee for the UBS Greek Text decided to retain the passage due to its evident antiquity). However, once again, neither the humanity nor deity of Christ is jeopardized by this passage, whether the verses are genuine or not. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus, being God, became flesh (John 1:14). So I fail to see how the addition of verses by well-meaning scribes that emphasize Jesus’ humanity in any way jeopardizes the authenticity of the New Testament.

(b) Luke 22:17-19, another well-known account of Jesus’ humanity (which also has some doctrinal implications regarding salvation), is Luke’s account of the last supper. Most of our oldest Greek manuscripts, as well as many Latin translations, render the passage, “And taking a cup, giving thanks, he said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say to you that I will not drink from the fruit of the vine from now on, until the kingdom of God comes.’ And taking bread, giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body. But behold, the hand of the one who betrays me is with me at the table.’”

CONCLUSION

OBSERVE carefully: The solutions to these differences **are detectable**. Even if we were unable to decide between two readings of a passage and determine with certainty which one was the original, **we know we have the Word of God**—since the original reading is one or the other of the readings. The fact is most variants are solvable. But even if they were not, be reminded that absolutely no doctrine of Christianity is at stake in any textual variant. The vast majority of textual variants involve **minor** matters. The rest do not affect doctrine as it relates to one's salvation. Even in those passages where an important doctrine might be deemed involved, that doctrine is affirmed in other passages where no variant is involved. **I repeat: no doctrine of the Christian religion that has anything to do with salvation is in jeopardy due to the existence of textual variants.** We can say with complete confidence that we have the New Testament as God intended. The Bible has not been corrupted.

The foremost textual critics of the last 200 years—the very men who are most familiar with this subject and who literally devoted their lives to poring over Greek manuscripts and becoming experts in textual criticism—have forthrightly declared the truth on this entire affair. Here are a few:

“[T]he superstructure of religion may be built with full hope and confidence that it rests on an authentic text.”⁶

“The variant readings about which any doubt remains among textual critics of the N.T. affect no material question of historic fact or of Christian faith and practice.”⁷

“All the authority and value possessed by these books when they were first written belong to them still.”⁸

“The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that **the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written** has now been removed. **Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.**”⁹

“[T]he great bulk of the words of the New Testament stand out above all discriminative processes of criticism, because they are free from variation, and need only to be transcribed.... [T]he words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than **a thousandth part of the whole New Testament.**”¹⁰

Did you catch that? Westcott and Hort, prominent textual critics at the end of the 19th century, declared that—even at **that** time—we could confidently affirm that we have 999/1000^{ths} of the original New Testament intact. The remaining 1/1000th is of no doctrinal consequence. Nothing has occurred since that time that alters their conclusion. The millennia-old allegation that

the Bible contains “thousands of inconsistencies and contradictions” is simply not true. **Case closed.**

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For an excellent treatment of this variant, see Guy N. Woods (1962), *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co.), pp. 324-326.
- ² For a discussion of the Trinity, see Kyle Butt (2015), “The Trinity,” *Reason & Revelation*, 35[10]:110-112, 116-119.
- ³ I.e., conflicting readings between manuscripts involving a word, verse, or verses. For more on this subject, see Dave Miller (2019), “Has the Bible Been Transmitted To Us Accurately?” *Reason & Revelation*, 39[10]:110-113, 116.
- ⁴ Bruce Metzger (1975), *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies), pp. 173-174.
- ⁵ Sir Frederic Kenyon (1912), *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan), second edition, p. 349.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 369.
- ⁷ F.F. Bruce (1975 reprint), *The New Testaments Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), pp. 19-21.
- ⁸ J.W. McGarvey (1974 reprint), *Evidences of Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate), p. 17.
- ⁹ Sir Frederic Kenyon (1940), *The Bible and Archaeology* (New York: Harper & Row), pp. 288-289, *emp. added*.
- ¹⁰ B.F. Westcott & F.J.A. Hort (1885), *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (London: Macmillan), pp. 564-565, *emp. added*.

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The Piercing of Jesus

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

TWO fascinating Messianic contexts are found in Psalm 22 and Zechariah 12-13 where a flurry of several very specific anticipations is presented. One of these anticipations predicts that the Messiah would be “pierced.” Compare the Psalmist’s allusion with Zechariah’s:

For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked
has enclosed Me. They pierced
My hands and My feet (Psalms
22:16).

Then they will look on Me whom
they have pierced; they will
mourn for Him as one mourns
for his only son, and grieve for
Him as one grieves for a firstborn
(Zechariah 12:10).

The first prediction obviously has as its setting the scene of the cross. The timeframe of the second is less certain, but undoubtedly refers back to the same crucifixion event. In any case, the allusion to being “pierced” is confirmed by the first century apostle John. Describing the crucifixion scene, specifically, the incident pertaining to the breaking of the legs of the two thieves, John reports concerning Jesus, who was already dead: “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out” (John 19:34). John immediately identifies the incident

as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah (vs. 37). He later alludes to this same piercing in connection with the coming of Jesus (Revelation 1:7).

Jesus experienced two distinct “piercings” on the occasion of the crucifixion. First, His hands and feet were pierced by the nails driven into His hands and feet and into the wooden cross by the Roman soldiers. Second, we are informed that shortly after He expired, a Roman soldier pierced His side, as if to ascertain for certain that He was deceased. None of the Gospel writers refer explicitly to Psalm 22:16 in connection with the crucifixion. Yet, the connection is all too obvious, not only because His hands and feet were, in fact, pierced by nails, but from the fact that Psalm 22 is riddled with several other Messianic predictions, including the ridicule heaped upon Him, the wagging of His enemies’ heads, and the dividing of His garments, as well as the graphic description of His depleted physical condition that characterized a crucifixion (i.e., the stretching of the skeletal framework, the extreme thirst, and the impact on the heart and chest cavity).¹

The question to consider is how could the Psalmist (cir. 1,000 B.C.) and Zechariah (cir. 500 B.C.)

anticipate that hundreds of years into the future the Messiah would be executed, and that that execution would include “piercing”? Stoning was the prevailing form of execution that typified Jewish society (Exodus 19:13; Leviticus 20:27; 24:14,23; Numbers 15:36; Deuteronomy 17:5; Joshua 7:25; 1 Kings 12:18; et al.). They certainly did not use crucifixion as a form of execution,² and the Roman Empire did not exist. Even if the Psalmist and Zechariah were familiar with crucifixion, how could they possibly predict with minute precision the piercing that Jesus endured? With so many forms of execution possible, what are the odds that both prophets would select “piercing”? Such specificity discourages guesswork. The charlatan remains vague and ambiguous rather than risk detection due to particularity. Since the Old Testament canon was complete two and a half centuries before Christ came to Earth, how could the Psalmist and Zechariah make such an exact prediction hundreds of years in advance? The only rational conclusion is that, as they claimed, they were supernaturally guided in their pronouncements.

ENDNOTES

¹ For the medical aspects of the crucifixion of Christ, see William Stroud (1847), *Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ and Its Relation to the Principles and Practice of Christianity* (London: Hamilton & Adams), p. 153. See also B. Thompson and B. Harrub (2002), *An Examination of the Medical Evidence for the Physical Death of Christ* (Montgomery AL: Apologetics Press); W.D. Edwards, W.J. Gabel, and F.E. Hosmer (1986), “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 255[11]:1455-1463, March 21.

² “Among the modes of Capital Punishment known to the Jewish penal law, crucifixion is not found”—Emil G. Hirsch (1903), *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk & Wagnall), 4:373.



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



New AP VBS—*Operation: Creation*

Apologetics Press is excited about our most recent addition to our VBS selection options. “Operation: Creation” is our latest VBS curriculum that we believe will be another tremendous contribution to the goal of educating and equipping young people to withstand the onslaughts of unbelief and skepticism that permeate our society. The subtitle for this VBS is “Defending the Foundations of the Universe.”

In this engaging and faith-building study, students will learn the differences between Creation and Evolution. These differences include learning about the origins of the Universe and the crucial differences between the Bible’s account of Creation and “The Big Bang.” Students will also study the age of the Earth and learn why it matters. They will learn about some of the important evidence for Creation to be found on Earth and why it doesn’t support evolution. They will examine

evidence from the animal kingdom and how this evidence points away from evolution and towards a supernatural Creator. They will also learn why God is the only good explanation for how human beings came to be on Earth.



“Operation: Creation” is an enjoyable, Bible-based, educational, and age-appropriate way to equip all ages for a lifetime of defending their faith against the attacks of evolution. We have endeavored to make this material biblical, practical, easy-to-use, and enjoyable for everyone. Our hope is that everyone who participates in your VBS will experience great spiritual

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Dave Miller

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